

## **These Shallow Graves**

**Jennifer Donnelly**

**Reviewed by: Sireen Mohammed, 15**

**Star Teen Book Reviewer of *Be the Star You Are!* Charity**

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Josephine Montfort has the easy life, everything handed to her with maids and butlers waiting on her and her family constantly. All her friends and family are rich, and they've never had much to worry about, but is it really the life Jo wants to live? Her life ambitions aren't the only thing she has to figure out when her father unexpectedly dies. The police, the press, the rest of her family, and basically everyone she knows tells her it was an accident, that her father had accidentally shot himself in the head while cleaning his gun, and it had inevitably led to his tragic demise. To Jo, something isn't adding up. Her father was the most protective person she knew, and there was no way he would've accidentally shot himself to death. But if everyone says that's what happened than it must be the truth, right?

When Jo takes some final letters from her father to the manager of a news reporting office, she hears a journalist (by the name of Edward Gallagher) say the most horrifying thing she could think of: her father's death had been a suicide. Her father's death being an accident had made no sense, and a suicide made more sense practically, but in all other ways, a suicide made even less sense to Jo. Her father had never been unhappy, so this explanation wasn't adding up either. Jo enlists the help of Eddie the journalist in solving the mystery, but they end up uncovering much more than either of them would have guessed.

Every young woman (including me) loves the story of a girl breaking gender barriers and misogynistic stereotypes, and this book does not disappoint. Throw in some murder, romance, and a whole lot of suspense and you have the amazing plot of *These Shallow Graves*. I loved watching Jo realize that being a trophy wife wasn't what she wanted, and that she'd rather help people in need and work with Eddie to uncover the truth. It took her a while, but by the end of the book Jo, just like everyone reading this should, realizes that other people's opinions don't matter to her, and the only dream worth chasing is her own. I recommend this book for children ages 12 and up.

### **Recommended Titles:**

A Northern Light, Jennifer Donnelly

The Book Thief, Markus Zusak

Girl at the Grave, Teri Bailey Black